



Hostal Cumbres del Volcán Flor Blanca

Sexta-Decima Calle Poniente #1937 Colonia Flor Blanca, San Salvador El Salvador

GPS: 13°41'50.21"N, 89°12'38.05", or 13.697334, -89.210617; Elev .753 meters, 2,471 ft
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MALCOLM'S HOSTAL CUMBRES DEL VOLCÁN INTRODUCTION TO EL SALVADOR

Introduction to El Salvador: The capital city of San Salvador is located in the center of the nation of El Salvador. The Pacific Ocean is south, just on the other side of the Cordillera del Bálsamo. The best surfing beaches in Central America, including Punta Roca at Puerto La Libertad, Playa El Tunco, and Sunzal are only 35 minutes by car or an hour by bus. To the north is Suchitoto, Chalatenago, the Rio Lempa, Ilobasco, Cojutepeque, Perquin, El Pital, the highest mountain in El Salvador at 2,730 meters (9,000 feet) and finally Honduras. To the west is Turicentro Los Chorros, Termos del Rio, Ruinas de San Andres and Joya de Ceren, Lago de Coatepeque, Sonsonate, Turicentro Atecozol, the Ruta de las Flores through the Cordillera de Iamatepec, Santa Ana, Chalchuapa, Ruinas de Tazumal, Ahuachapán and Guatemala. To the east is Lago de Ilopango, San Vicente, Usulután, San Miguel, La Tortuga Verde Surf Resort at Playa Cuco, the Golfo de Fonseca, and Honduras. There is more biodiversity in Central America than in any other part of the world. Sweet corn, tomatoes, avocados, chocolate (cacao) are all originally native to Central America. El Salvador is 270 km (168 miles) long west to east, and 142 km (88 miles) north to south as the crow flies. But the very mountainous and varied terrain makes it seem much larger. In this very small country there is packed 307 km (191 miles) of coastline and 22 volcanoes, 6 classified as active. There are 7 major national parks: *Montecristo Cloud Forest* near El Pital, *Bosque San Diego La Barra* near Metapán, *Ecologico Bosque de Cinquera* east of Suchitoto, *Bosque Imposible* in the Cordillera de Iamatepec in Ahuachapan, *Parque Deinenger* in the Cordellera del Bálsamo east of La Libertad, *Volcán Cerro Verde* overlooking Volcán Izalco in Sonsonante, and *Bosque La Joya* in San Vicente. *La Fundación Refugio Salvaje (FURESA)*, located in a beautiful park near Jayaque, is a private foundation for preservation of animals.

San Salvador: San Salvador is a sprawling, chaotic city, but underlying the chaos is an orderly grid with Avenidas running north/south and Calles running east/west. The east/west spine is Calle Arce to the west and Calle Delgado to the east. Calle Arce jogs one block south to become Alameda Roosevelt at 25 Av by Parque Cuscatlan. Alameda Roosevelt changes names to Paseo Escalón west of the Salvador del Mundo monument at 67 Av which is also where Colonia Escalón begins. The north/south spine is Avenida España to the north and Avenida Cuscatlan to the south. Avenidas west of the north/south spine are odd numbers, to the east even numbers. Calles north of the east/west spine are odd numbers, to the south even numbers.

The capitol is a modern city, and what with earthquakes, fires, wars and the extraordinary growth of the last 50 years, a lot of the historic city has been lost. But if you have a good imagination, you can still envision the picturesque city this once was in its almost magically beautiful valley between Volcán Quetzaltepec and the crater lake, Lago de Ilopango. San Salvador today is a much different city than it was before 1980; I call it the city of surprises because just when you think everything beautiful has been buried beneath diesel fumes, graffiti tagging, trash and ugly walls you find a quiet patio with a beautiful fountain; or a wrought iron grill over a window whose artistry and workmanship take your breath away; or best of all, a friendly face on the bus wanting to help you find a good place to eat because Salvadorans are the friendliest people on earth. The economic and political troubles that began around 1970 nearly destroyed El Salvador, but they did not destroy the people, who today are working hard to rebuild their once beautiful capitol. El Salvador is a nation of artists and I have faith that one day San Salvador will be worthy again of its beautiful setting. And for all its faults, San Salvador is never boring.

Hostal Cumbres del Volcán Flor Blanca, and the Lopez Mansion: We are located in Colonia Flor Blanca, the oldest and once the most elegant of the six western suburbs whose neighbors are Escalon, San Benito, San Francisco, Maquilishuat and La Mascota. Before the 12 year civil war (peace came in 1992) these were all exclusively residential neighborhoods. They were primarily middle class, with a few great mansions and estates scattered amongst the more modest residences. El Salvador has a long history of ground breaking modern architecture, and these neighborhoods were filled with outstanding examples of both traditional and highly original modern work. The architects of El Salvador were important leaders of Latin American design. They were extensively copied, especially in Central America, Cuba, and Florida. Nearly forgotten names like Armando Sol; Ernesto de Sola; the firms of F. Noltenius/Salvador Choussy; Jorge Alfaro D., Rene Suarez, Federico Morales Rodriguez (firm of Alfaro, Suarez, Morales); Jose Maria Duran, and the firm of Dada, Silhy were well known and highly respected all over the Americas. The art and trade schools of Santa Cecelia in Santa Tecla and the José Mariano Méndez Escuela de Artes (founded in the early 19th century in Santa Ana and now in ruins) were world renowned. Standards of design, workmanship and artistry were remarkable, especially in wrought iron, masonry, ceramic tile, and woodworking. Quality residences were nearly always furnished with handmade Salvadoran furniture, often designed by the architect. You may run across pieces in antique stores in El Salvador today. We are lucky to have several pieces of family furniture custom made for the Lopez Mansion when it was first furnished in 1951. It was built for Carlos Dordelly in 1950 on part of his family's land. Sr. Dordelly immediately sold the newly built house to Dr. Cesar Emilio Lopez and his wife Dolores Rivas de Lopez (Lola). We have not been able to establish with certainty who the architect was, although design cues indicate it was Ernesto de Sola. The noted obstetrician and his wife moved in with their two adult children, son Cesar Lopez Jr. with his wife and 4 grandchildren, and his older sister Bertha. Their years to enjoy their beautiful new home were fated to be relatively short. The Doctor died at age 61 in 1958. Their son Cesar Jr. moved to Montreal Canada with his family in the 1970s when the economy in El Salvador began to falter badly. For the next 40 years the house was inhabited by four old ladies: Lola, her mother also Lola, born Orantes and widow of two husbands Sr. Rivas and Sr. Masferrer (she lived into her 90s as did many in this long-lived family), Lola's sister, and of course Berta, Lola's daughter called Tia Tita by the family. When we bought the house after Berta died at age 91 in 2015 she had lived in the house for 65 years. The last 15 years she was all alone after her mother Lola died at age 100 in 1997. In when we bought the house it was in a very dilapidated state after many years of deferred maintenance. We replaced the roof with handmade tiles made in Nejapa El Salvador, restored all the woodwork, replaced all the plumbing including a new 5,000 liter water tank, replaced most of the electrical system, installed a new kitchen and 4 new bathrooms, plus cleaning and painting everything. We opened the Hostal Cumbres del Volcán Flor Blanca in May of 2016.

La Novia: An interesting sidelight to the story of Dr. Cesar Emilio Lopez is the story of La Novia. Many years before he moved into his beautiful new home in Flor Blanca, when he was a newly graduated doctor from the Medical School of the University of El Salvador, he married Lidia Cristales. Three months into their marriage and Lidia was pregnant. The newlyweds decided to celebrate by taking a vacation into the mountains in Eastern El Salvador. While vacationing, Lidia had a tragic complication to her pregnancy and began to bleed very badly. The doctor was an inexperienced young graduate. He tried valiantly to save her life, but was ultimately unsuccessful and she died from loss of blood. In recompense, he did two things. First he commissioned a magnificent statue to mark her tomb in the Cementerio de los Ilustres. It is now one of the most famous statues in El Salvador with many myths surrounding it. It is sculpted life size on a beautiful marble base. Lidia is dressed in full bridal regalia, including flowers and lace. All is of the very finest work in pure white marble-- a magnificent work of art. The second thing the doctor did is decide to specialize in Obstetrics so he would never feel as helpless as he did when his wife was dying. He went to France to study for two years, and when he returned to El Salvador he quickly rose to the first ranks of Obstetrics and founded the Obstetrical Society of El Salvador, the Hospital Maternidad, and the Hospital Policlinica, today the Hospital ProFamilia.

Civil War Years

When I first came to El Salvador in 1981 the troubles leading to the Civil War had already begun, and the Epoca de Oro of high coffee prices, rapid industrialization and an exploding middle class was definitely over. Even then the western suburbs of Colonia Flor Blanca and Escalón remained a fairy land of flowers and gardens, with no ugly walls. Every house had a name like Villa Gladys, Casa Ruthie, La Campana, or Castillo Venteroso written in wrought iron script or ceramic tile high up on the front; every house also had a metal plaque stating the year built and the architect's name displayed with pride near the entrance. In 1989 guerrillas invaded this haven of privilege and held Colonia Escalon for three days. Ugly jerry-built walls went up like lightening and things were never the same again. The names of the houses are nearly all gone, as are most of the plaques. The beautiful architecture and gardens that remain are often hidden now behind ugly walls that never came down. We are very proud that both our locations in Colonia Escalon and Flor Blanca do not and never had walls around them. Their beautiful architecture can be enjoyed by all as was intended.

Economic changes were also to transform the western suburbs. During the war the old Centro Histórico was not safe, and political demonstrations continually interrupted normal business. The death knell to the old historic center came with the earthquake of 1986 which destroyed some of the most important buildings including all the first class hotels. Today there are no major hotels, department stores, restaurants or nightlife in the old center of the city. Business and money has gone west into what were once exclusively residential suburbs. Population and the wealthiest residents have gone even further west to new housing developments on the far western edge of the city in El Espino, Antiguo Cuscatlan, Santa Helena, Merliot and Santa Tecla, or even further west the gated communities lining the highway to the beach. Many of the magnificent estates and mansions in Flor Blanca and Escalón have been replaced by hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, strip malls, fast food, office buildings and gas stations; or the most ignominious fate of all, remodeling by architectural butchers. The new center of San Salvador, scattered though it may be, is today the formerly exclusive residential western suburbs, of which the largest and most important are Colonia Escalón and Colonia San Benito, adjacent and to the west of Colonia Flor Blanca. Look closely, and look behind the walls when you can: you will find that there is still a lot left of the beauty and artistry that was once there-- you just have to use a little imagination.

Our Neighborhood: Hostal Cumbres del Volcán Flor Blanca is located on 6-10 Calle Pte on the corner of 37 Av. Sur right across from the Gimnasio Nacional. Thus we are 19 blocks west of the Centro Histórico or about 2 kilometers. We are 4 blocks South of Alameda Roosevelt (the eastern part of Paseo Escalon) or half a kilometer. 1 more block farther east is Parque Infantil Tin Marin and Parque Cuscatlan. Four blocks west is our favorite restaurant, La Casona where you can eat like a king for less than \$5.00 or enjoy a balde (bucket) of 6 local beers for \$6.00. Only 2 blocks west on the corner of 41 Av. is a super-comedor (Salvadoreans call the informal street eating places comedores) with excellent food at even lower prices; unlike most comedores it is open late. Right next door in the garage of our neighbor is a Comida a la vista open for lunch only. We let the same friendly lady offer excellent breakfasts right on our corner every day. There are also many comedores in the Parque Cuscatlan every lunchtime, mostly serving the employees of Hospital Rosales right across the street.

If you want to venture a little farther west, we have a special relationship with the Centro Español, a private club located on the corner of Paseo Escalón and 83 Av. Nte. The club has a large swimming pool with locker rooms, well equipped gym, tennis and handball courts, restaurant, bar, and refreshment and food service area by the pool. It is a great facility, and all of our guests can use the facilities for the day for just \$10.00 per person, applicable to food or drinks. Just take one of my cards. If the entry guard does not understand, tell him you are from Cumbres del Volcán, and Alejandra (the manager) has an arrangement with Malcolm to let you use the facilities with a \$10.00 minimum purchase.

Parque Cuscatlan, just a couple of blocks east of us has a small art gallery, Salon Salarrue, which has rotating art exhibits. The park is also the starting point of one of our favorite events in El Salvador, the night bike ride held every Thursday at 8:00 pm. If you are here with

children, Parque Tin Marin occupies the western corner of the park. It is a wonderful children's museum. the best Minutas or snowcones in San Salvador can be found from the pushcart vendors in the park. On Alameda Roosevelt, just west of the park is a little bar that hosts Lucha Libre every Sunday afternoon. The audience for Lucha Libre makes this a very Salvadoran and very unique event.

A large SuperSelectos Supermarket, is west of us, at the corner of Avenida Olimpica one block north and 59 Av Sur. 6 blocks North on 49 Avenida is Metro-Centro, the largest shopping center in Central America, and nearly a city in itself. There is a modern multi-screen cinema, and every kind of food imaginable in several food courts and restaurants. We especially recommend El Pueblo Viejo (see also nightlife section below). A little farther west between 73 Av. and 71 Av on Paseo Escalon/Alameda Roosevelt is the Galería Escalón, another large shopping mall (Salvadorans love their shopping malls). Both malls are about a 20 minute walk. Galeria Escalon has a whole room full of ATM cash machines, a modern multi-screen cinema on the 4th level (more likely to show movies in English than Metro-Centro), and a huge food court on the 3rd level as well as many international luxury stores. There is a Post Office on the second level and an Avianca/Taca airlines office on the basement level facing 71 Av. The mall is built around a real mansion, built in the early 1950s as the home of the Guirola family and later the Salvadoran headquarters of the Organization of American States. Starbucks Coffee is on the second level, and inside Starbucks is an old picture of the mansion before it was encased by a shopping mall-- a rare example of historic preservation in El Salvador. If you go a little further west, just past Parque Fuentes Beethoven, on the south side of Paseo Esclon is the Ice Cream and Popsicle (Paletas) store. They sell handmade Michoacan real fruit paletas in every flavor imaginable. My favorite is tamarindo con chile.

Local City Buses Nearby: Regular local city buses are 20 cents; minibuses are 25 cents. All routes have variations which can be confusing, but useful once you understand them. The other confusing thing is many of the bus routes are in the form of a circle, so the bus you return on may be a different route than the one you took to get there. There are several city bus routes close to us that will take you to most parts of the city: **Ruta #4, Ruta #30B, Ruta #101D Ruta #52, Ruta #101B, Ruta #42** and **Ruta #102** to **Puerto La Libertad & the beach**. The closest to us is **Ruta #4**, which stops right on our corner going east on 6-10 Calle. One block up, it stops on the other side of the street going west. The **#4 East** turns north on 25 Avenida, turns east on Tercera Calle to Plaza San Jose in the **Centro Historico**. It continues east to the **Reloj de Flores** on Alameda Independencia, just a couple of blocks west of **Terminal Oriente** and the **Tica Bus San Carlos Terminal** where it turns north on the Troncal del Norte to Cuscatancingo and Ciudad Delgado. You can catch it coming back at the **Reloj de Flores**. **#4 West** goes to the **Terminal Occidente**, then continues on to 59 Avenida and the **SuperSelectos Supermarket** on the corner of Av. Olimpica. If you go to the supermarket, you can come back on the same bus going down (east) Av. Olimpica (it will circle back at 49 Av, passing **Terminal Occidente** on Bulevar Venezuela before circling around again and continuing down 6-10 Calle to us).

Ruta #30B bus goes to **MetroSur/MetroCentro**. The closest bus stop is on Av 45 half a block north of 6-10 Calle (our street). The bus will be heading South, but will circle around Estadio Magico Gonzalez to go north on 49 Av. If you walk a few blocks farther north to Alameda Roosevelt you can take the **Ruta #101B** or **Ruta #42**, both of which go to **Santa Tecla** and nightlife center **Paseo El Carmen**. Both buses pass the convention center (**CIFCO**) and **Museo Antropologico David Guzman** in San Benito, only a few blocks walk to the **Zona Rosa**.

Ruta #102 goes to the beach, the popular surfing point **Punta Roca**, and the huge fish market on the pier in **Puerto La Libertad**. From Puerto, you can take any bus going up and down the coastal highway or Litoral to the beaches to the west, **Playa El Tunco, Playa Sunzal**, or farther west, **Playa Dorado** or **Salinitas**. The other direction to the east is **Playa San Diego**. The great surfing beaches far to the east are more easily reached by going through San Miguel for **Playa Cuco, Playa el Espino, Playa Tamarindo, Playa Flores** or the **Golfa de Fonseca**. Buses for the white sand swimming beaches of the **Costa del Sol** leave from the Terminal Sur in San Marcos.



Hostal Cumbres del Volcán

SECURITY:

Many of our guests worry about safety in San Salvador and outside the city. Judging by my personal experience, San Salvador is no more dangerous than any big city. You must use common sense as you would anywhere, including watching out and guarding against pickpockets-- especially in crowded places like the Central Market or buses when there is standing room only. Snatching bags, packages, cameras, or cell-phones is the most common crime, and usually avoidable if you pay attention and keep things attached. The most dangerous thing you can do is walk home late at night after drinking-- especially alone. Only take with you what you will need for the evening; I call it ready to be robbed! Although Salvadorans are wonderful, friendly people, there are a few who will take advantage to follow and rob you if you look drunk. Have your bar/club/restaurant call a taxi for you-- it is in their self interest to keep you safe and happy, so they will call a good cab with a fair price. Not entirely following my own advice, I sometimes have a beer in the evening at La Casona or the Super Comedor just up the street on 6-10 Calle and walk back alone. I have never had a problem, but then the walk is only a few blocks and I don't get drunk.

Like my native Los Angeles San Salvador has dangerous neighborhoods and safer neighborhoods. In general the western part is safer and the eastern part poorer and more dangerous. The northern part is mixed. I personally walk all over San Salvador, ride buses in and outside of the city both by myself, with my wife, Walter, Sara or friends. I drive all over, daytime and nighttime and have never had a problem in over 30 years of coming to El Salvador, and living here mostly full time for over 5 years. I smile and talk to people wherever I go including security guards (they are great for directions--- they know their neighborhoods and they get very bored!). I try to talk and meet people on the bus, especially on longer trips. I always find Salvadorans to be friendly and very helpful-- they love to talk to extranjeros. Although I have no proof of this, I think talking to people and being friendly keeps you safer. I generally stay out of the Centro Histórico at night (it is largely empty after dark anyway), but I make exceptions when there are organized events at the magnificent Teatro Nacional or the Cicleada Nocturna which starts in Parque Cuscatlan 2 blocks east of us at 8:00 PM Thursday evenings. These events have special security. I walk freely around the western part of San Salvador in the neighborhoods of Hostal Cumbres del Volcán in Flor Blanca, Escalon, San Benito and the Zona Rosa day and night.

We are fortunate that the offices of SIGET, the government agency responsible for regulating the electric system, is right across the street from the Hostal Cumbres del Volcán Flor Blanca. They have 24 hour guards, plus the Policia patrol regularly. Don't be afraid of the security guards and their shotguns; they are on your side if you need help. They don't make much money, so if they are helpful with directions or advice give them a dollar tip. They may try to refuse it, but be firm and assure them it is a token of your appreciation, not payment for services which were freely offered. Bottom line, be careful, but enjoy your time here; San Salvador is not as much different from Los Angeles or London as you may have heard.



Hostal Cumbres del Volcán

MALCOLM'S HOSTAL CUMBRES DEL VOLCÁN FOOD GUIDE TO SAN SALVADOR

\$=Less than \$5.00; \$\$=\$5.00 - \$8.00; \$\$\$=\$8.00 - \$12.00; \$\$\$\$=More than \$12.00

(Note: Nearly all Salvadoran restaurants including most comedores serve beer.)

COLONIA FLOR BLANCA

SUPERSELECTOS SUPER MARKET is on the corner of 59 Av. Sur and Bulevar Olimpica. This is about a kilometer and a half walk, but you can also take the **#4 Bus** which runs up and down our street, 6-10 Calle. You can buy groceries and cook at Hostal Cumbres del Volcan Flor Blanca. There are a couple of little **Tienditas** at the end (south) of 37 Av. which sell a few grocery items, snacks, drinks including beer, a few pharmacy items like aspirin and toothpaste, and cigarettes. You can also buy **Pupusas** next door to the tienditas in this area called **Comunidad Asunción** for 25 to 35 cents each (including curtido and salsa) for takeout; 2 or 3 pupusas are usually plenty. Sara or Walter will help you buy them, including sodas or beer to drink. For better pupusas, we recommend walking a couple of blocks west on 6-10 where there is a bigger and very popular **Comedor** on the corner of 6-10 Calle and 41 Av. with excellent pupusas plus many other delicious Platas Tipicas.

RESTAURANTS are listed in approximate order of distance from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán Flor Blanca. They are within walking distance unless noted. The most economical are the comedores. The huge shopping Center **MetroCentro** has several gigantic food courts and every kind of fast food imaginable. It also has an excellent restaurant called Pueblo Viejo, listed separately below.

La Casona \$ for breakfast, lunch or dinner. It is located mid-block on 6-10 Calle between 43 and 45 Av. This is our local hangout, for breakfast, lunch or dinner or just for a few beers at night. Excellent carne asada, shrimp and seafood on weekends, chicken, pupusas. All food excellent. You can have a wonderful meal for under \$4.00. Friendly local atmosphere. Highly recommended.

Super Comedor \$ as mentioned above, on the corner of 6-10 Calle and 41 Av, open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. By far the best comedor, we call it the Super Comedor because of its popularity, the variety of food offered and the late hours. It is located on the corner of 6-10 Calle and 10 Av. In addition to excellent food, they have an equally excellent juice bar with drinks called refrescos (fruit with water and sugar), liquados (fruit with milk), or just jugos (fruit juice without water usually sweetened). Unlike most comedores, the SuperComedor stays open late-- especially weekends. Like nearly all Salvadoran restaurants including comedores and fast food beer is available.

Cafe Don Pedro \$ Interesting, even if the food sometimes leaves a little to be desired. Don Pedro's is one of the oldest restaurants in San Salvador, and is a local landmark. It is on Alameda Roosevelt, on the NW corner of 39 Av. It is an old time American Diner, and used to have car hops serving people in their cars. It is one of the few restaurants in San Salvador open 24 hours a day, and has live Karaoke weekends (live Karaoke is like Mariachi except you sing with them). A great place to go after the Thursday night bike ride, which starts and stops just across the street in Parque Cuscatlan.

Pueblo Viejo \$\$ In Metro Sur, lower level on the corner of 49 Av. Nte and Bulevar de los Heroes. MetroSur is the southern part of the huge MetroCentro shopping mall. Good breakfasts and good food, but the real reason to go is the all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet for \$8.95 on weekends, which is truly fabulous and very popular. Live Latin Music (soft enough to talk). Fresh squeezed orange juice, eggs cooked to order, excellent omelets and all types of breakfast meats. Ends about 10:30 AM. Weekend nights (Conga Nights) this is one the best traditional Latin music and dance places in the city along with **Casa Piedra** in Planes de Renderos. Recommended.

Comedores \$ Salvadorans call the informal eating places on the street Comedores. There are many scattered throughout Colonia Flor Blanca. Good breakfasts are under \$3.00, but don't

come late-- Salvadorans eat breakfast early; there won't be much left after 9:00. Ditto with lunch. Excellent food & low prices, but over before 2:00 pm.

Fast Food and Servicio al Domicilio Salvadorans LOVE Fast Food. The best places close to us are the Food Courts in MetroCentro with every fast food you can imagine. There is also a modern Multi-Screen Movie Theater. The huge new MacDonald's on Salvador del Mundo at 61 Av. is the closest to us (10 blocks) and has a McCafe (copy of Starbucks). Wendy's is also popular; there is a good one across the street from the Galería Escalon. All Fast Food restaurants and Pizzerias (Krispys, Pizza Hut, Papa John's, many, many others) in San Salvador deliver (Servicio al Domicilio), as do almost all other restaurants here. If a restaurant does not have its own motorcycles, Gourmet Express will deliver from any restaurant. Delivery from any place in Colonia Flor Blanca, Escalón or San Benito usually takes less than 15 minutes and is free (but please tip the motociclista).

Restaurants located a little farther west in Colonia Escalon and the Zona Rosa:

La Ventana \$\$\$ Plaza Palestina. A Salvadoran landmark for over 30 years. Excellent Restaurant and art gallery serving Continental Cuisine. Lunch and dinner specials are listed on the chalk board at the entrance. Beautiful terrace and the art usually changes once a month. Morphs into Pub later in Evening as do many Salvadoran restaurants. The owner is Belgian; his wife is a Salvadoran artist. German and Belgian beer a specialty. Popular with expats. Full Bar.

Malibu Costa Brava \$\$\$ Plaza Palestina. Excellent, very popular Mariscos (seafood) restaurant. Prices are surprisingly moderate for a pretty classy place. Open terrace overlooking the Plaza. Full Bar.

Kaipin \$\$ Plaza Palestina. Mexican Food, Kaipin, a Peruvian restaurant closed, and a Mexican Restaurant replaced it, but I have forgotten the name. Across the street from Malibu Costa Brava. I have not eaten here yet; please review it for me.

Holas Permanente \$\$ Plaza Palestina opposite La Ventana. Mariscos (Seafood), but other dishes too. Most of the excellent seafood rates three \$, but there are moderate selections available so I gave it two \$. Beautiful terrace facing the Plaza is a great place to have a Cadejo beer (the local microbrewery). One of the owners is an artist, and there are paintings and mosaics everywhere including one of their surf resort at Playa El Zonte. Garden seating inside. Worth taking a peak just to see the light fixtures custom made by the owner. Beer and Wine only now, but they are seeking a full liquor license.

Take a Wok \$ Plaza Palestina. Chinese Fast Food, a twin to the one at Playa el Tunco. Good food, good prices, and another comfortable terrace on the plaza. Also in the same building is a landmark delicatessen called **ISA, Deli and Smokehouse**, here since 1962 and owned by a Palestinian family-- the Deli is take-out only.

La Charrua \$\$\$ Plaza Israel, one block from Plaza Palestina. Excellent Uruguayan barbecue. Similar (but better) to Argentine style steakhouse. Excellent food at good prices. I prefer the local beef served here to the much pricier imported beef at Ruth's Chris. Excellent sausages. They serve exotic meat as available including rabbit, iguana, snake and sometimes the local giant rat whose name I have blissfully forgotten. The owner is a retired professional soccer player from Uruguay. If you are a fan, he loves to talk football! Full Bar.

Krisppy's \$\$ 81 Av Nte entre 9 Calle Pte y 11 Calle Pte. This is our local Pizza place. Only one table so mostly delivery. Pizza and prices are OK. Salads are better than average for El Salvador (hard to find a good salad here). We like the vegetarian pizza and the ensalada griega. Delivery is fast as they know us, and they are only 2 blocks away.

Moody Blues \$ 79 Av Nte y 9 Calle Pte. Excellent Mexican food at very moderate prices + cheap Salvadoran beer. Good for lunch or dinner. Becomes a sports bar/pub later in the evening. The buckets (baldes) of 6 beers on ice are always popular (under \$7.00).

Swagat \$\$\$ 79 Av Nte y 3 Calle Pte. Indian Food. New place. Nice place, genuine cuisine (the owner and head chef are from India), but a little pricey. There are lots of vegetarian selections, and the prices of these are more moderate. An excellent choice for vegetarians.

Fogata \$\$ 79 Av Nte y 1 Calle Pte. A tropical pub bar with outside eating area. Similar, but a little smaller than Barrakuda. New and appears to be popular. I think they have a full bar, but am not sure.

Betos \$\$\$ 85 Av Nte y 3 Calle Pte. Excellent Seafood (Mariscos). Hard to say which is better Betos or Malibu Costa Brava. This restaurant is on our street, but south of Comunidad Pedrera where the street starts again. Full Bar.

Mile Time \$\$ 11 Calle Pte between 79 Av and 81 Av Excellent 100% vegetarian Japanese restaurant with some Chinese dishes. Good coffee and pastries for an afternoon cafecito. Good soups. They have vegetarian shushi, but I have not tried it. Very large selection of teas.

Tipicos Margoth \$ 77 Av Nte y Pasaje Ismania, just past 5 Calle Pte. Excellent Pupusas and other traditional Salvadoran food. Very good Orange juice. One of the best bargain places to eat. Recommended.

Barrakuda \$\$ 77 Av Nte, on the corner of 3 Calle Pte. A classic outdoor tropical pub bar. Hamburgers, and typical bar bocas at moderate prices. Full Bar.

Puerto Mariscos \$\$\$ 77 Av. Nte, Corner of 5 Calle Pte. Popular seafood restaurant, a little cheaper than Malibu or Betos and nearly as good. Popular when there are big soccer games. Full Bar.

La Taberna \$ 79 Av Sur y Calle La Mascota, 4 blocks south of Paseo Escalón. Very popular beer hall and sports bar with a wide variety of excellent quality bar and grill food at good prices. GIANT TV. A 20 minute walk. Recommended. Full Bar.

Restaurant 168 \$\$\$\$ 89 Av Nte y Calle del Mirador. Said to be the best Chinese restaurant in San Salvador, but I prefer Royal (see below) which is not quite as expensive. Full Bar.

Buddha Lounge \$\$\$ 89 Av Nte a block or two down (south) of Restaurant 168. This is a new Chinese restaurant, and it looks very nice but I have not tried it. Menu (posted outside) looks expensive, but there are some specials that look very good at reasonable prices. I would guess that like all Salvadoran Chinese restaurants the portions are very large and are meant to be shared.

Cafe, Cafe \$\$\$\$ 99 Av. Nte y 1a Calle Pt Bis, en Calle El Tanque #130, Col. Escalón, Tel. 2263-2413. Some say this Peruvian Restaurant serves the best food in San Salvador. Peruvian and more with an emphasis on seafood. Email: rcuadra@cafecafe.com.sv lunes a sábados: 12:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. y de 6:00 p.m. a 10:30 p.m. Domingos: 12:00 m. a 3:30 p.m.

Tapas y Vinos \$\$\$ 91 Av Nte y 9 Calle Pte. Popular Spanish restaurant. Lots of wine selections. Full Bar.

Kamakura \$\$\$\$ 93 Av Nte y 9 Calle Pte. The best Japanese restaurant in San Salvador. Excellent Shushi. Large portions, so easy to order too much food. They have a traditional Tatami room where you sit on the floor. Beautiful Japanese art and antiques and a small Japanese garden with fountain. Full Bar.

Chinatown \$\$\$ Paseo Escalón y 91 Av. Nte. A good Chinese restaurant, cheaper than Restaurant 168 or Royal and almost as good. Full Bar.

Caliches \$\$ 87 Av Sur y Calle Padres Aguilar. The best value for Mariscos in San Salvador. Small chain. Quality is excellent, and prices less than the fancier places like Malibu Costa Brava, Betos and Holas. Nice patio in the rear. Recommended.

Azteca \$\$ 87 Av Sur y Calle Padres Aguilar. Good Mexican food.

Royal \$\$\$ 87 Av Sur y Calle Padres Aguilar. Excellent Chinese food in luxurious atmosphere. A little less pricy than Restaurant 168 and perhaps better. Large portions. Full Bar.

Pops \$ 87 Av Sur y Calle Padres Aguilar. Pops is a local chain that serves the best ice cream in Latin America. Everything is excellent, but my favorite is the milk shakes either chocolate chip or mixed cafe and vanilla. My daughter goes straight to have their banana split first thing every time she comes to San Salvador.

Mister Donut \$ Paseo Escalón right below 87 Av Nte. Great donuts and other pastries and OK coffee. Wonderful breakfast buffet with everything at good prices, but after 9:00 gets stale so come early. Good orange juice. The place is Mister donut, but the things they sell are "Donas". Go figure!

Rustico Bistro \$\$ 3 Calle Pte entre 73 Av Nte y 75 Av Nte. The best hamburgers in El Salvador. My wife and I split one because they are very BIG! French fries are good too. One block from the Galería Escalón, the big shopping mall on Paseo Escalón between 71 Av Nte y 73 Av Nte.

Wild Wings \$\$ Bulevar Masferrer entre 5 Calle Pte y 7 Calle Pte. Similar to Buffalo Wings. American chain. Popular at night.

Kreef's \$\$ Bulevar Masferrer entre 5 Calle Pe y 7 Calle Pte (across the street from Wild Wings. Classic New York style delicatessen. Excellent breakfast meats and breakfasts. Also classic sandwiches. Deli sells high quality meat and cheese for take-home. This is a small local chain. There is another one near us on 87 Av Sur a couple of blocks south of Pops.

Hanami Sushi \$\$ Bulevar Masferrer on the southeast corner of 3 Calle Pte in a building with several excellent asian restaurants. All you can eat Sushi. **Hunan \$\$\$\$**, is upstairs. Large portions make prices more reasonable than they first appear.

Maki Sushi \$\$ Tercera Calle Pte, #5328, just above (west) of Bulevar Masferrer. Excellent Sushi. On Thursdays (12:00 noon to 3:00 pm; 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm) and Sundays (12:00 noon to 3:00 pm) they have all you can eat for \$13.99 including a drink. Recommended. Full bar.

Quinta (5th) Avenida between 27th and 37th Calles \$ This street in Colonia Layco near Iglesia Luz del Mundo and the Universidad Nacional has many small restaurants tipicos that are a cut above comedores and pupuserias, but still very economical. The whole street is very popular evenings. Carnitas Mamá Chuz is one of the oldest and most popular. Mariachis on weekends.

PLAZA TORRE FUTURA, Calle del Mirador, Entre 87 Av Nte y 89 Av. Nte.

Bennigan's \$\$\$ This is the most popular place at the Tower. Glassed in terrace bar with a view of the city, nicer before they glassed it in. Popular at night. Beer is pricier than many local bars at \$2.99 a bottle for local beer. Sometimes 2 for 1 specials on drinks, but no fixed schedule on this. Popular place for viewing Soccer games (more than 20 TV monitors!). Food is good American food including excellent (and very large) hamburgers-- but all a little over-priced. I was going to say the place is not very Salvadoran, but on second thought, Salvadorans have always liked foreign food going all the way back to the 19th century and all the employees and 90+% of the patrons are Guanacos. Full bar.

Buffalo Wings \$\$\$ This is the second most popular place in the Tower after Bennigans (because they are the 2 cheapest places). I don't personally like salty chicken wings, so I can't judge this place very well. My kids like it, and the food seems exactly like in the USA where I don't like it either. The food is maybe a little less expensive than Bennigans. Excellent french fries. Same beautiful terrace with view of the city as Bennigan's, but not glassed in. Full Bar

Caminito Chocos \$\$ I believe this is one of the few local places at the tower (although the franchises are locally owned). They also have a place in Paseo el Carmen. Outside bar/terrace like Bennigan's but nicer as it is still open and Bennigan's glassed-in their terrace spoiling the view and making it hot. Bennigan's is bigger and still more popular, so it remains a better place to meet Salvadorans and just hang out at the bar. But I expect Caminito Chocos to become more popular as it is slightly cheaper. Mainly typical Salvadoran Bocas and hamburgers. Prices, like all the places at the tower, are a little higher than similar places in San Salvador. Full Bar.

Olive Garden \$\$\$ Just like USA. Italian food at fairly moderate prices. Full Bar.

El Zocalo \$\$\$ Upscale Mexican food. One of the better bargains at the Tower. Food is priced similar to Bennigans, but the atmosphere is that of a fine restaurant instead of a pub. Eating area is inside and air conditioned. On the upper terrace. Full bar.

Coffee Cup \$ Coffee Cup is a local Salvadoran chain, with excellent coffee including Starbucks invented iced frappes, espresso etc. Pastries are better than at Starbucks (and so is the coffee in my opinion), but pastries are not as good as at the local bakeries.

Go Green \$\$ Fast food salads. Eating area outside on the central plaza. Salads are OK, not as big as I would like for the price, but better than most in El Salvador where good salad is hard to find.

Go Crepes \$\$ They share their space with Go Green. Crepes are simple but OK. Both desert crepes and dinner crepes. One of the more economical places to eat at the Tower, but you sit in the central plaza, not on the terrace with a view like Bennigan's, Buffalo Wings and Buffalo Pizza.

Viva Espresso \$ Coffee Cup has good coffee, but Viva Espresso coffee is better. Similar pastries as Coffee Cup, but a nicer sitting area, 2 levels of air conditioned space with living room type seating, also lounge seating outside. On the upper terrace by El Zocalo.

Pastelería Florence \$\$ Much larger selection of pastries than Coffee Cup or Viva Espresso, and pretty good coffee too. Also some general lunch and dinner selections. Also on the upper terrace, but not as nice a seating area as Viva Espresso.

Tapas y Canas \$\$\$ Spanish food (the name means snacks and sweets, although tapas are a Spanish traditional snack prepared in great variety and eaten as a full meal). They have good deserts, and you can eat inside in an air conditioned space with view of the city, or outside in the central plaza. Full bar.

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse \$\$\$\$ Excellent steaks with imported Prime USA beef. Great if you like that kind of very tender meat. I personally prefer the slightly tougher, but to me more flavorful local beef. Also excellent seafood including imported, very high quality lobster. VERY EXPENSIVE--you can easily pay more than \$30.00 per person. Full bar including fine liquor from all over the world. I prefer La Charrua (see above).

Koi Sushi \$\$\$ Excellent sushi, but expensive. Also other Japanese dishes including tempura. All high quality with excellent service, but I expect this place to close soon. There is already a better, much more atmospheric Japanese restaurant 3 blocks higher up the side of our Volcano-- Kamakura on 93 Av. Nte. (see above). If you have had a few too many drinks at Bennigans and crave Shushi but can't make it up the hill, this is your place. Full bar.



Hostal Cumbres del Volcán

MALCOLM'S HOSTAL CUMBRES DEL VOLCÁN GUIDE TO SAN SALVADOR NIGHT LIFE

COLONIA FLOR Blanca

La Casona \$ Really a restaurant, but great for a beer. Live entertainment sometimes on weekends. See restaurant section for more information. For the staff at Hostal Cumbres del Volcan Flor Blanca, this is and the Super Comedor listed below are our local hangout. Highly recommended.

Super Comedor \$ Mainly an eating place, but like La Cason, great for a beer. More detailed information in restaurant section above. Highly recommended

Cafe Don Pedro \$ Interesting, even if the food sometimes leaves a little to be desired. Don Pedro's is one of the oldest restaurants in San Salvador, and is a local landmark. It is on Alameda Roosevelt, on the NW corner of 39 Av. It is an old time American Diner, and used to have car hops serving people in their cars. It is one of the few restaurants in San Salvador open 24 hours a day, and has live Karaoke weekends (live Karaoke is like Mariachi except you sing with them). A great place to go after the Thursday night bike ride, which starts and stops just across the street in Parque Cuscatlan.

Pueblo Viejo In Metro Sur, lower level on the corner of 49 Av. Nte and Bulevar de los Heroes. Weekend nights (Conga Nights) this excellent restaurant transforms into one of the best traditional Latin music and dance places in the city along with Casa Piedra in Planes de Renderos. About 2 and a half kilometers, so a fairly long walk. Before 7:30 on you can take the **Microbus Ruta #52** on the corner of 89 Av. Nte and Calle del Mirador which will take you to MetroSur/MetroCentro, But you must take a taxi back. (See also under Restaurants above). Full Bar. Recommended.

Scape One of the largest Discos in the city. Primarily Gay. On Alameda Juan Pablo II just west of 59 Av Nte. There are several primarily gay bars located nearby. Full Bar.

SAN LUIS (Just north of Metro Centro)

Cafe La T Colonia Centroamérica, Calle San Antonio Abad #2233 in the area usually called San Luis because it is near the San Luis Shopping Center. An old style New York/Greenwich Village style Coffee House with excellent coffee, plus beer and wine. Live music, movies and special events on an irregular basis, but more likely to occur on Fridays or Saturdays. Full bar.

El Arpa Irlandes Also in San Luis, Av. A, Colonia San Jose, #137 across from CitiBank San Luis. An Irish Pub style bar, in the middle class area of San Luis, near the Universidad Nacional.

ZONA ROSA/SAN BENITO (just west of Flor Blanca)

This area, 3 kilometers west of us, has many clubs and restaurants and was formerly the principle night life area of San Salvador. But Paseo El Carmen in Santa Tecla has recently upstaged it. However there is still a lot going in the Zona Rosa. Walking from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán takes about 20 - 25 minutes. Taxi is \$5.00. Most places are relatively expensive (but half USA or European prices in their top dance clubs, bars and restaurants). **Antique** on the south side of Bulevar Hipódromo just West of Calle La Reforma is the most popular disco in the Zona Rosa. Nearly as popular is **Los Riconcitos** a couple of blocks farther West on Bulevar Hipódromo on the north side of the street. **Los Riconcitos Bar** is a nice quiet place in front completely separate from the disco which is upstairs with an entrance on the side of the building. Also on Bulevar Hipódromo on the south side of the street across from McDonald's are **Marquee** and **FK Faktory Disco** two more big disco dancing clubs. The clubs change frequently, so please excuse me if they have changed again since this was last updated.

Denny's Also on Bulevar Hipódromo is one of the few eating places in San Salvador open 24 hours. Breakfasts are excellent. It is on the north side of the street just east of Holas.

Holas An excellent and very popular seafood (mariscos) restaurant with a full bar. Weekends it is open late and becomes more of a pub bar. Beautiful open air atmosphere, also on Bulevar Hipódromo just west of Denny's.

Republik Very big American-Style place. On Calle La Reforma, only one building south of Hipódromo. Hamburgers and other traditional American food, but mainly a drinking place. Very popular weekends. Full bar.

Cadejo Micro-brewery selling the excellent Cadejo premium craft beer made at this facility (ask for a tour). Half a block further down Calle La Reforma, and on the other side of the street from Republik. Recommended.

Rio Bar and Lounge Eclectic mix of live music. special nights like acoustic night, Karaoke Night etc. See their Facebook page for the latest schedule: <https://www.facebook.com/riozonarosa> On Bulevar Hipódromo near Calle La Reforma.

Las Terrazas @ the MultiPlaza This area is just west of San Benito in the Multiplaza shopping mall. At night the upper Terrazas level is transformed to a center of upscale restaurants and bars. The most popular Disco Dancing Clubs in San Salvador **Nvy @ Las Terrazas** and its less exclusive twin **Stanza6** were here, but with a recent major remodel they were both kicked out and closed. I have not yet researched the impact this has had on the discos in the older Zona Rosa area on and around Bulevar Hipódromo, but Nvy and Stanza6 were very popular, so I would expect business there and in Paseo El Carmen has increased noticeably.

COLONIA ESCALON, BARS/PUBS (just West of Flor Blanca):

This area, 4 kilometers west of us, has many restaurants, bars and clubs. It is a 30 to 40 minute walk, or a \$5.00 taxi ride. It is just north of the Zona Rosa but is much more spread out.

Barrakuda \$\$ 77 Av Nte, on the corner of 3 Calle Pte. A classic outdoor tropical pub bar. Hamburgers, and typical bar bocas at moderate prices. Very popular with a full Bar.

Bennigan's Details above under Plaza Torre Futura. Glassed in bar with a view of the city. Good place to have a beer in the evening. Very popular. Full Bar.

Caminitos Details above under Plaza Torre Futura. Also a nice outside bar on the terrace with a view of the city. Full Bar

Time to Taste \$\$\$ Details above under Plaza Torre Futura. A new place that seems to be mainly a bar, but also serves a wide assortment of bocas and some continental entrees. Full bar.

La Ventana Plaza Palestina. Details listed above under Restaurants. Also a very good place to have a beer. Full bar.

Moody Blues 79 Av. Nte y 9 Calle Pte (4 blocks from us). Good Mexican food + cheap Salvadoran beer. Sometimes live entertainment on weekends; stop by and ask what is scheduled (¿hay entretenimiento en vivo este fin de semana?).

Centro Español A private club on Paseo Escalón on the corner of 83 Av. Norte (next to Freund Hardware store). The Hidalgo Bar and two restaurants are open to the public. They have a very large beautiful pool and a gym which the Hostal Cumbres del Volcán has arranged for our guests to use by paying \$10.00 a day, all of which can be applied to food and drinks. Just ask Malcolm, Walter or Sara for information if you wish to swim or use the gym. Permission not needed for the bar or restaurant, so you can stop in for a beer to check out the pool and gym.

Barra Española Karaoke Place on 11 Calle Pte. Very close to the Hostel, but not nearly as good or as popular as 4020 Club on Redondel Luceiro at Bulevar Masferrer.

Circo A circus themed bar on Pasaje Ismania 1/2 block below 75 Av Nte. They have live entertainment on some nights with the schedule of events posted outside.

BarBass 79 Av Nte. Alternative rock and jazz, and an eclectic mix of other music. Music can be very good or very bad. Small place above a pool hall and next door to the new Indian Restaurant Swagat.

40/20 Club The best Karaoke in the city. Very popular. Just 8 blocks above us (west) on Calle del Mirador at Redondel El Luceiro (aka Plaza Uruguay). A lot of fun-- one of my favorite places, and they just moved much closer to us to this beautiful new location with a view of the city. The new location brings back memories of the early 80's when the very popular 6 story Disco Luceiro took up the entire building next door (now offices). All the crazy nightlife in San Salvador ended during the civil war when a curfew was instituted. It has taken 20 years to come back in Colonia Escalón and Paseo El Carmen. The 40/20 Club is highly recommended. Closed Sundays; full bar.

La Fogata New, and popular. On 79 Av. Nte. NE corner of Primer calle Pte just down (south) from the Indian Restaurant Swagat. La Fogata is a restaurant Pub/Sports Bar that becomes more a bar as it gets later. Full bar.

La Taberna 79 Av. Sur at Calle la Mascota 4 blocks south of Paseo Escalón. Buckets (Baldes) of local beer for under \$1.00 a bottle during happy hours. They recently moved to this new location which is a beautiful, open-air terrace set high above the street. Also listed in Places to Eat section above. Excellent and very popular beer hall (with full bar).

Lips The biggest (and most expensive) strip club in the City, right below Plaza Masferrer. Full Bar.

Insomnia On Paseo Escalón, a couple of blocks down (east) from Lips. A disco dance club, recently extensively remodeled. Full bar.

PASEO EL CARMEN

The most happening place in the greater San Salvador area at night is Paseo el Carmen in the historic center of the town of Santa Tecla, about 10 km west of Hostal Cumbres del Volcán. Many of the guide books say the Zona Rosa is the center of nightlife in El Salvador, but they are out-of-date. Paseo El Carmen in Santa Tecla has, without question, the most happening nightlife, and is one of the few walking around night areas in the city. The Zona Rosa is mostly expensive, but Paseo el Carmen covers all price points including street food, bars, clubs, live music and street vendors (plus fine restaurants). Paseo el Carmen and the Mirador at Planes de Renderos are pedestrian walking around areas, not just a series of parking lots like the Zona Rosa or one big parking structure like Las Terrazas. At Paseo el Carmen there are so many restaurants and bars, and they change so frequently that I will not try to list them. But if you want a night on the town, this is the place to go. **Ruta #101B** or **Ruta #42**, as detailed in bus section above, but after 7:30 PM you must take a taxi home for around \$12.00 (not so bad if you can get a group together). Or find someone with a car.

PLANES de RENDEROS

El Mirador The area around the Mirador has many small pupuserias, restaurants, bars, and a few curio stands selling artesanias (handicrafts), souvenirs and of course the ubiquitous \$1.00 CDs. This is a small, but very popular and inexpensive nighttime walking around area. There is a beautiful view of San Salvador and Lago de Ilopango from the Mirador, which is a masterpiece of Salvadoran Art Deco Architecture designed by the firm of Alfaro-Suarez, Morales and built about 1950. In the area surrounding the Mirador are some very large pupuserias. The Puerto del Diablo is nearby (about 2 kilometers). If you make the hike up either of the two giant rock formations, you will experience a fabulous view point including San Salvador, the Pacific Ocean, Lago de Ilopango, and if clear it seems like all of Central America. Planes de Renderos around the Mirador is a traditional place for Salvadorans to have pupusas on Sunday night with their families. It is one of the rare places in the city that is busy on Sunday night. It is also traditional to go there on New Years when it is mobbed with Salvadorans from the diaspora of the 70s and 80s who come home to relive the traditions of their childhoods.

Casa Piedra is on the way up to the Mirador, Kilometer 8.5 on Carretera de Planes de Renderos. The best traditional live latin music dancing club in San Salvador including cumbia, marengue and salsa. Also pretty good food, and not too expensive. Fabulous view of the city from the southern hills. Very popular on weekends. My wife and I love to dance under the whirling ceiling fans to Cumbia and Marengue. They also play salsa, but my wife and I aren't very good at that. You must drive or take taxi which is \$9.00 or \$10.00. Continue up the highway and you come to the Mirador (see above). Highly recommended.



Hostal Cumbres del Volcán

TOP THINGS TO DO IN SAN SALVADOR:

MUSEO ANTROPOLOGICO DAVID GUZMAN - the best Salvadoran museum of Pre-Columbian artifacts from all over the country. A 25 minute walk from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán or an easy 20 cent bus ride on **Ruta #30-B** from 3 Calle Pte at 79 Av. Nte. When you come back, take the #30B, but exit the bus at the Salvador del Mundo monument and then take the **Ruta #52** bus to return to Hostal Cumbres del Volcán

MUSEO DE ARTE (MARTE) - the largest art museum. Close to the David Guzman museum. A 25 minute walk from us, or again a 20 cent bus ride. Both of these are in the San Benito neighborhood. The Feria Internacional is right across the street from the David Guzman museum. It has various rotating events which also might be interesting. I just went to the Comic-Con convention there in May-- very interesting. Also a **Ruta #30-B** 20 cent bus ride.

MUSEO FORMA FUNDACION JULIA DIAZ - My favorite art museum in the city. At Monumento Salvador del Mundo. The private collection of Julia Diaz, a famous Salvadoran artist and early aviator. She was a leader of the Epoca de Oro for Salvadoran art and architecture from 1935 to 1975. The museum is in a beautiful mansion designed by Armando Sol who rebuilt and expanded it several times. It was formerly the home of Miguel Pinto, the owner of the Diario Latino newspaper which famously opposed General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez during his dictatorship from 1933 until he was overthrown in 1944. The home originally had beautiful gardens between the house and the monument. Today it is hidden behind large buildings and must be entered from the back from Pasaje Florida Sur. It is a very easy 20 cent bus ride on the **Ruta #52** bus , or a 20 minute walk from Hostal Cumbres. del Volcán. If you are interested in Historic El Salvador, its art and architecture, ask Malcolm to see his collection of old photos, and link information. He has over 5,000 historic photos that he has been collecting for over 30 years.

GALERIA DE FERNANDO LLORT One of El Salvador's most famous living artists has his studio and gallery, the Arbol de Dios, only 10 blocks (about 1 km) from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán on Bulevar Masferrer just south of Redondel Luceido (aka Plaza Uruguay) between 7 Calle Pte y 5 Calle Pte. His gallery sells a mix of expensive fine art (very fine indeed!), and less expensive, but still interesting arts and crafts, produced under his direction by his students. Fernando Llorc invented the folk art style now associated with La Palma where he once lived. He combined folk art traditions with his own colorful and unique style. His gallery has examples of this style along with other very different work. An extraordinary talent.

CENTRO HISTÓRICO. This is a great place to walk down, then take the **Ruta #4** Bus back from Plaza San Jose. About 4 kilometers. During the war the old **Centro Histórico** was largely abandoned by major hotels, restaurants, nightclubs and bars. Its death knell was nearly struck with the earthquake of 1986 which devastated the Centro causing the loss of some of its most beautiful buildings including the modern Gran Hotel San Salvador. There has been a lot of work done in the last 20 years to try to resuscitate the Centro, but it is still pretty much deserted at night except for wonderful events at the magnificent **Teatro Nacional** (built 1910) and the **Lucha Libre** every Sunday (starts 4:00 pm) in a parking garage. There are still many interesting things to see including the **Palacio Nacional**, formerly the seat of the legislative branch of government and now a museum of the history of the country, the **Catedral** including the crypt and museum about the life of Monsenior (soon to be Saint) Oscar Romero, the very interesting 1960s architecture and iron art work of sculptor Rubén Martínez of the **Iglesia El Rosario** on the site of the original Spanish cathedral on Parque Libertad, and the chaos and lively street life in the historic center of capital city. Don't miss the **Mercado Ex-Cuartel** 2 blocks from Parque Libertad. This is the largest market for artesenas in the city. Another must see is the Central Market (**Mercado Central**) just to the southwest of the Palacio Nacional. The mercado is in two buildings with the larger one an additional block diagonally southwest from the Palacio Nacional. The mercado also sprawls into all the streets surrounding the markets. While at the mercado, don't skip the **Cementerio de los Ilustres** right behind (west) of the market. The cemetery has some of

the finest sculpture I have seen anywhere. Don't miss the tombs of La Novia (Lidia Cristales de Lopez) first wife of Doctor Lopez the first resident and namesake of the Lopez Mansion (now Hostal Cumbres del Volcan Flor Blanca); early aviator Enrico Massi (an old biplane); and whoever died in a motorcycle accident and had his motorcycle preserved on top of his grave. The Centro is safe during the day. It is a downhill walk from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán Flor Blanca to the center and takes half an hour (walking direct) or 45 minutes if you meander around along the way as I like to do. To come back, catch the **Ruta #4** bus for 20 cents on Plaza San Jose on Primer Calle Oriente in the Centro Historico.

BICYCLING EVENTS AND THE CICLEADA NOCTURNA. Bicycling is very popular here especially organized group events, and the night bike ride is one of my favorite things in San Salvador. The biggest night ride, the Cicleada Nocturna, leaves from the Parque Cuscatlan at 8:00 PM Thursday nights generally with over 200 riders. A free event, but bike rentals are \$4.00. To get a good bike be there an hour early. We have one good bike which we rent for \$5.00 a day (plus \$25.00 deposit) if we are not using it ourselves. The bike route changes every week and ranges from 20 to 40 kilometers taking about 2 hours. Parque Cuscatlan is right across the street. For information on the Ciceada Nocturna, check out their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/asociacionciclistasurbanos>. There are other rides throughout the week that are shorter than the Thursday one. In Santa Tecla is a bike store called Zumos y Pedales that rents bikes (including a bicycle built for two) and also sponsors many group bike rides throughout the week. Check out their web site, www.zumosypedales.com for a schedule of their events, email them at javier.otero@zumosypedales.com, or call them 2228-2284 or 7607-3931.

LUCHA LIBRE in the Centro Histórico every Sunday in a bar on Alameda Roosevelt just on the other side of Parque Cuscatlan. There is another location in a parking garage on Sexta Avenida Norte between Primer Calle Oriente and Tercera Calle Poniente. Amateurs start before 4:00 pm and Championships at 6:00 or 7:00 pm. \$2.00 admission. Bus **Ruta #4** will take you to the centro; you can walk to the one on Alameda Roosevelt.

BARRIO SAN JACINTO, 3 MUSEUMS + JAPANESE GARDEN. Barrio San Jacinto is just south of the Centro Histórico. The three museums are the former or Excasa Presidencial on the history of El Salvador; a couple of blocks away the Museo Cuartel Zapote about the military history of the nation including the civil war from 1980 to 1992 (surprisingly even-handed presentation); and the third, also nearby and adjacent to the Parque Zoologico is the Natural History Museum located in the old hacienda of Japanese-Salvadoran Saburo Hirao in beautiful Parque Saburo Hiraoa at Final Calle Los Viveros, Colonia Nicaragua. All three museums are excellent. Bus from Plaza Barrios in the Centro Histórico to San Jacinto is **Ruta #2-C** (20 cents as are all the big city buses). On the other, northern side of the city is the Museo Imagen y la Palabra, a smaller museum with a lot of material about the civil war, mostly as told from the side of the guerrillas, so it makes a good pairing with the Museo Zapote. But to see all 4 of these would be a lot of museums in one day!

VOLCÁN SAN SALVADOR OR QUETZALTEPEC:

The ride to the top of the volcano is stunning, with breathtaking views overlooking San Salvador. Access to the crater is through the tiny community of El Boquerón (big Mouth which is what Salvadorans usually call the volcano). From Hostal Cumbres del Volcán it is a 30 minute drive by car or taxi, or about 1 hour on two buses. Take bus **Ruta #101-D** to Santa Tecla from 79 Av Nte on the corner of 11 Calle Pte (aka Calle del Mirador), 3 blocks below us. Get off the **Ruta #101-D** in front of the Plaza Merliot Shopping Mall on Calle Chiltiupan. Walk west one half block to 17 Av. The bus stop for bus **Ruta #103** to the Boquerón is on the northeast corner heading up 17 Av. This bus will take you to the tiny community of Boquerón, which is 1 km below the entrance to the crater and

park. The walk is steep but cool due to the altitude. The park is open daily 8 am - 5:00 pm. Entrance fee is \$1.00 per person plus \$1.00 per car. The volcán last erupted in 1917, creating a mini-cone 50 meters high at the bottom of the crater. There is a path to the bottom of the crater, but it is treacherous and best done with a guide. There are pupuserias outside the entrance to the park, but the quality of food is very mixed. If you can find a taxi, you can find much better food with fabulous views at the Finca San Fernando, an old Hacienda de Café that has been turned into a beautiful restaurant (highly recommended). It is a little farther down the highway from the turnoff to the Parque Boquerón. Or go back toward San Salvador to the Plaza Volcán which has several moderately priced restaurants. The most popular is Pupuseria Loca. To come back, reverse the steps, but the **#101-D** will go up 75 Av. Nte instead of 79 Av. Nte (due to one-way streets). So you will have to walk an additional couple of blocks.

EAT - lots of great places to eat at all price levels (see my detailed guide of restaurants within walking distance of the Hostal Cumbres del Volcán). Pupusas are a must, best place Tipicos Margoth 6 blocks from us. Also Minutas (snow cones), ice cream (always great here, but the best is

at Pops), street food of all kinds and luxury restaurants of all varieties - with Chinese, Mexican and Italian the most popular international foods. Plus this is Fast Food Paradise!

SWIM AT CENTRO ESPANOL - We have a relationship with Alejandra, the manager of this beautiful private club. Our guests can use all of the facilities all day for \$10.00 which is applicable to food or

drink (they have a full bar). There is a beautiful 25 meter long swimming pool with locker room (but take a padlock), a well equipped gym, tennis and handball courts, a bar, restaurant and food and drink service area by the pool. There are many individual kiosks where you can hang out by the pool and just relax. Only 4 blocks away on Av. 83 and Paseo Escalon. Take one of our cards for

entry. Usually security at the entrance will let you in. If they don't understand, just go to the club office with our card and explain to them. Alejandra is the manager and she speaks good English.

MOVIES. Excellent modern multi-screen theater is the Cinopolis on the 4th floor of the Galería Escalón Shopping Mall on Paseo Escalón 1 block below the Fuentes Beethoven. Lots of snack food in the lobby area, or you can bring up stuff from the food court one level down. A 10 minute walk from the Hostal Cumbres del Volcán.

PAINT BALL! - Try something different. There is a large Paint Ball park in Rancho Navarro, just off the Autopista Comalapa (the same exit as for Planes de Renderos. Ask if you are interested for more information.



Hostal Cumbres del Volcán

OUTSIDE SAN SALVADOR:

LAGO DE ILOPANGO: A beautiful volcánic crater lake with crystal clear water from the watershed of the Volcán San Vicente or Chichontepec that looms over the lake. The water is over 250 meters deep. Lago de Ilopango is only a 45 minute drive from the Hostel, or a one hour bus ride (Bus Ruta #52 to Terminal Oriente, then Ruta #15 from Terminal Oriente to Turicentro Apulo at Lago de Ilopango). Go diving with El Salvador Divers on the Lake, (<http://www.elsalvadorsdivers.com/>) or get your open water PADI certification in 3 days. Or just go swimming at the newly remodeled turicentro Apulo. This volcano is one of the more active in San Salvador and is a favorite diving spot, with many interesting volcanic formations below the surface including a place where hot water and steam vent into the lake. The bottom also shows many lava flows over the millennia since the lake was formed in a gigantic eruption about 2,000 years ago. Bus takes a little over an hour.

PLANES DE RENDEROS, PUERTO DEL DIABLO, PARQUE BALBOA Y PANCHIMALCO: Planes de Renderos is in the hills to the south of San Salvador between the city and the ocean. At night the Mirador at Planes is a favorite spot with ciudadanos because there are a lot of very inexpensive pupuserias and other comedores. There are also souvenir stands. Not much going on during the day, except for a spectacular view of the city from the Mirador, which is also a masterpiece of art deco architecture designed by the firm of Alfaro-Suarez, Morales. Night activity there is mainly on weekends. The Puerto del Diablo is just a little farther up on the road to Parque Balboa, the largest park in San Salvador. The view for Puerto del Diablo is truly spectacular. You can see the ocean on one side and the city on the other including the beautiful crater lake, Lago de Ilopango. A little farther up the road to Planes is the tiny colonial village of Panchimalco. Before the civil war, Panchimalco was a must stop for tourists to El Salvador. But as a major center of guerilla activity during the war, the tourists all disappeared. The village has never recovered, and there is not much there now except the beautiful colonial church, Iglesia Santa Cruz de Roma, built in 1725 and the oldest standing colonial structure in El Salvador. It is beautifully restored and on the first Sunday in May is the not-to-be-missed spectacular Fiesta de las Flores y las Palmas, or Flowers and Palms in honor of the Virgin Mary. There is another fiesta Patronale on the 13th and 14th of September in honor of Santa Cruz de Roma, but this is not as spectacular as the flower festival.

LOS CHORROS:- This is a beautiful turicentro located on the highway to Santa Ana. It is a natural series of waterfalls, with beautiful swimming pools constructed below them. There are also little inexpensive eating places. Entry fee is under \$3.00. Very popular with families, especially on weekends. If you like to swim, it is a perfect spot-- and costs very little. It is only 30 minute drive by car or 45 minutes by **Bus Ruta #79**, which leaves from Salvador del Mundo.

TERMOS DEL RIO: A water park just a few kilometers past Los Chorros at KM 39.5. The water park is built on a natural hot spring, which feeds one of the large swimming pools. Ancient legends ascribe curative properties to the water, especially for muscular pain and sore joints. In any case, lounging in the hot water is very relaxing. There are several large pools of cool water for swimming, all kinds of water slides, lots of different kinds of food at modest prices (especially for an amusement park). There is live music on weekends and sometimes during the week. I love swimming and this is one of my favorite places. Some of the Buses #201 to Santa Ana stop at the turnoff to the Park, a 3 kilometer walk from the entrance. Ask if the bus stops at the park, as not all do (este bus se para en el desvío a Termos del rio?).

LOS CHORROS DE TAMANIQUE: One of the most beautiful places in El Salvador. A series of 3 magnificent waterfalls in the Cordillera del Bálsamo half way up the mountain side from Playa El Tunco. You must hire a car from San Salvador, or take a tour. When you get to the small town of

Tamanique, find Pedro (7957-3286) who owns the property where the falls are located and leads tours from the central Plaza. The falls are about 45 minute hike, quite steep. But it is worth; the falls are spectacular. If you are brave you can follow the locals and jump from the cliffs. The water is over 15 feet deep, so you won't hit rocks if you carefully only jump where the locals do. See Malcolm or Walter for arranging a tour.

SUCHITOTO: This is the most beautiful colonial town in El Salvador. A center of Anil (indigo) production in the 18th and 19th century. Good places to eat and stay on a fantastic bluff overlooking the valley of the Rio Lempa and Lago de Suchitlan. The Lempa is the largest river in Central America. There is also a ferry to Chalatenango from Puerto San Juan on Lago Suchitlan below Suchitoto (walking distance). Be sure to check out the Rinconcito Hostal and restaurant El Gringo owned by my friend Robert Broz (El Gringo). Other great restaurants are the Posada de Suchitlan, El Tejado, and La Fonda del Mirador. Bus to Suchi takes about 1 hour from the Terminal Oriente.

THE RUTA DE LAS FLORES: This is the name of the country highway that winds through some of El Salvador's best coffee highlands and the beautiful mountain villages of Juayua, Concepcion de Ataco and Apaneca. If you have only 1 day, I would recommend going only to Juayua. See the town, and don't miss the fantastic swimming and beauty of the 7 waterfalls at Los Chorros de la Calera right outside the town-- walkable or you can hire a mototaxi. Be sure to stop in at the Casa Mazeta owned by my English friend Darrin-- also an excellent place to stay. Bus to Juayua takes a little over 2 hours from the terminal Occidente. Walter and Sara, our employees are both from Juayua and can give great tours when they are available, and great information always. There is a beautiful restaurant on your left, just at the beginning of the road to Juayua from Salcoatlitan called Parque y Restaurante La Colina. The gardens are very beautiful and the food is excellent \$\$\$\$. There is also a new restaurant that I have not yet been to called El Rosario. They have rodeo events and live entertainment. It is located on an old Hacienda de Cafe at kilometer 93 1/2 on the Ruta de las Flores. Their web site gives event information: : <http://www.negociosyturismoelrosario.com> In Juayua, Salcoatlitan, and Concepcion de Ataco all have fiestas de gastronomico on weekends (food festivals). Juayua's was the first and is still the largest. The Cadejo Salvadorean Craft beer company also has a restaurant/bar in Juayua; Live entertainment on an irregular basis. If you have the time, start in Ahuachapan and work your way backwards to Ataco, Apaneca, Salcoatlitan and Juayua. Ahuachapan has a beautiful hotel in an historic house, La Casa de Mamapan. Here is a link to their English web site: http://lacasademamapan.com/index_ing.html

BEACHES: El Salvador has more than 200 miles (nearly 400 KM) of beautiful beaches. Many of the beaches to the west are at the base of cliffs, with many beautiful rocky coves and view points from the cliffs. Most have black volcanic sand. The beaches to the east are flatter, palm fringed and many have white sand. The most recent serious shark attack in El Salvador was in the 1940s. Bus #102 to Puerto La Libertad is about 1 dollar and takes about an hour (leaves from in front of the Terminal Occidente). To go on to Playa El Tunco is another 15 minutes, usually on the #80 bus (25 cents), although a few of the #102 buses from San Salvador continue on west past La Libertad to Majahual, Tunco, Sunzal, Zonte, Playa Dorada and Acajutla. La Libertad and Tunco are the most popular, and both are interesting. La Libertad has better food. Tunco has better cheap hostels, more night life and partying, and more young international surfers and tourists. Both are major surfing beaches where you can take surfing lessons or rent surf boards for very reasonable prices. Bobby Rotherham, an American surfer champion, has owned the Punta Roca Restaurant and Surf Resort on Playa la Paz in La Libertad since the 1970s (in La Libertad, Playa la Paz is west of the pier or Muelle, and Playa Obispo is east of the Pier; Punta Roca is the western end of the town). Bobby and his son Jimmy who is also a champion surfer, sponsor many International competitions at Punta Roca on Playa la Paz. One of my wife's young cousins was the Salvadoran Surfing champion and gives surfing lessons at Punta Roca; if you are interested ask me for his cell number. In La Libertad, the La Terraza Bar on the 3rd floor (top floor) terrace of the AST Surf Hotel is a great place to have a drink, as is the beach front terrace of the Punta Roca Restaurant.

For excellent seafood at low prices I recommend the area east of the pier on Playa Obispo (to your left as you face the ocean); there are also many upscale eating places in La Libertad-- all right on the beach and with views. If you want to go a little more upscale, there are three excellent seafood restaurants set on the cliffs overlooking the surfers at Playa Sunzal west of Playa el Tunco: Cafe Sunzal, Betos and La Curva de Don Gere (which also has a large swimming pool). While Tunco is the young, poor surfer's paradise, Sunzal is the richer, older surfer's paradise where groups relive their youth in beautiful surf resorts like Casa de Mar and Roca Sunzal. Tunco and Sunzal are separated by a little creek. La Libertad, El Tunco and Sunzal make a very complete trio. Just a little farther west are the surfing beach Playa Zonte (a little less frenetic than El Tunco) and Playa Los Cobonos, where there is excellent diving. A wonderful day trip from tunco is the waterfalls, Las Cascadas de Taminique, in the mountains above the beach. There are tours from El Tunco, or you can just take a

1 hour bus ride (Ruta #187 from the Coast Highway) to the tiny town of Taminique. From there one of the guides will take you to the waterfalls (a fairly rigorous 1 hour hike). The guides will usually find you, but if not just ask anyone in the town: ¿Dónde puedo encontrar una guía para las cascadas? Don't miss the last bus! Remember to ask; ¿a qué hora es el último bus?

Just a little further west of Sunzal at Salinitas near Sonsonate is the Hotel DeCamaron. This is a cruise-style resort, where all food, entertainment and drinks (including alcohol) are included in the price. Regular price is about \$300.00 per person per night, but they often offer specials during the week. They have an office in San Salvador on Paseo Escalón. The DeCamaron is really the only Cancun style, major resort in El Salvador, although the Tesoro Beach Hotel on the Costa del Sol comes close.

If you have a car, check out the beautiful, palm fringed, white sand beaches to the east of La Libertad on the Costa del Sol. Everything here is spread out and without a car you must ride the beach bus everywhere. But there are great restaurants, hotels and miles of beautiful beaches, including the very upscale Tesoro Beach Hotel.

Further east, La Tortuga Verde is owned by my surfer friend Tom at Playa at Cuco on Playa las Flores near San Miguel. This is farther away from San Salvador, but a beautiful place with great surfing and accommodations ranging from \$10.00 hostel rooms up to casitas which rent for around \$100. Tom sometimes offers boat tours to the Golfo de Fonseca, and always has events and fun. Surfing lessons are always available, as are surfboard and motorcycle rentals. Highly recommended.

LAGO DE COATEPEQUE: Another spectacular crater lake just off the highway to Santa Ana. This is a little farther away and smaller than Ilopango, but very beautiful. The lake is very under developed, but has several small restaurants and hostels around the lake. We like Rancho Alegre just to hang out for the day. Many of the places are closed during the week and only open on weekends. Be sure to check before you go if your destination is open. By car about 1.5 hours, by bus about 2.5 hours. Remember local buses don't run late here, so ask: ¿A que hora es el último bus?

MAYAN & PIPIL RUINS: The closest ruins are San Andres and Joya de Ceren, both of which are just off the highway to Santa Ana, just past Los Chorros (see above). The San Andres ruins consist of one larger pyramid and several smaller ones. Joya de Ceren is very close by. You can walk there from the San Andres ruins, but the direction is a little confusing, so better to have a guide take you. Joya de Ceren is the most famous archeological site in El Salvador, but it is not very visually exciting. It is a small community that was buried by volcanic ash about 590 AD by the Volcán Loma Caldera. The population escaped as no bodies were found, but they apparently had very little time as they left food on the table, clothing, furniture and many other objects of daily use. This site has provided the best information about daily life of the post classic period and the Pipil/Nahuat culture of any archeological site in the Americas.

SANTA ANA: Santa Ana, Ahuachapan and Suchitoto have the best preserved historic architecture in El Salvador. The Centro Histórico in Santa Ana looks remarkably like San Salvador did 100 years ago, but Santa Ana has preserved its historic heritage far better than San Salvador.

The best place to stay (and one of the friendliest Hostels in El Salvador) is the Casa Verde, 7 Calle Poniente, Entre 8 y 10 Av. Sur. #25, Santa Ana. Don't miss the Teatro de Santa Ana, which I believe is the most beautiful building in El Salvador. Go to an event there if possible, or at least take a tour of the interior. The style is neo-classical, a style that was very popular in all of Latin America at the end of the 19th century. The Teatro de Santa Ana is one of the very best examples in all of Latin America and is in magnificent original condition. A similar teatro was in San Salvador, but it burned down about 1905 and was replaced by the existing Teatro Nacional - magnificent, but not the equal architecturally of the Teatro in Santa Ana. Another interesting site is the Ruinas Ex-Escuela de Artes "José Mariano Méndez", at one time one of the most famous arts and crafts schools in Latin America, but now sadly in ruins. In the central Plaza Libertad, in addition to the teatro is the magnificent gothic cathedral (1909), and an art museum in a beautiful art deco mansion. Completing the wonderful collection of architecture that is Plaza Libertad is the City Hall or Alcaldia, an interesting and beautiful building in its own right, just a little overshadowed by its neighbors.

PARQUE NACIONAL VOLCANES: The park includes Volcán Ilamatepec or Santa Ana, the highest volcano in El Salvador at 2,381 meters and one of the most active, plus the long extinct Volcán Cerro Verde and Volcán Izalco. Until the 1960s when it suddenly stopped, Volcán Izalco was the most active volcano in Central America, erupting nearly continuously for 200 years. It was called the lighthouse of the Pacific. Ilamatepec last erupted in 2005. Lago de Coatepeque is part of the same volcanic system, but not part of the national park. Hiking to the top of Ilamatepec is a fairly strenuous and long hike, but the view from the top is fabulous. I give thanks to the excellent web site <http://dontforgettomove.com/category/elsalvador-backpacking/> for the following instructions:

1. From Santa Ana catch the #248 bus at 7:30am from La Vencedora bus station. You can also pick up the bus as it follows Calle 25 out of the city of Santa Ana. One and a half hours, 90 cents.
2. Arrive at Cerro Verde between 9-9:30am after a beautiful scenic drive around Lago de Coatepeque. Entry fee to Parque Nacional Volcanes is \$1.00. Relax for awhile as the tour does not start until 11:00 am. There is a small *comedor* serving basic food, coffee and snacks.
3. Tour leaves for the main crater at 11:00 am with a guide and a couple of tourist police for security. Pay \$1.00 for their services.
4. After a half hour you will come to private land where the owner will charge you another \$1.00 to cross his property.
5. Soon you'll hit the park entrance to the Santa Ana volcano and pay the rangers. \$6.00 for a foreigner or \$3.00 for a national.
6. After another hour or so you will reach the crater at the top. You can smell the sulphur as you near the outer rim. The guides will want you to start hiking back down by about 1:30 pm.
7. Arrive back at the park entrance by 3:00 pm, but you'll have to wait till 4:00 pm to get the bus back into Santa Ana.
8. Bus arrives back in Santa Ana around 5:30 pm and costs 90 cents, or you might be fortunate enough to meet a few other travelers on the hike who can give you a ride back.
9. Total time for the day trip is 10 hours and \$12.80 for transport and entrance fee (or \$9.80 for a national). Bring some snacks, especially if you're a vegetarian as food options are limited.



Hostal Cumbres del Volcán

BUSES AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION + SPANISH SCHOOL INFORMATION

Most fares in the City are 20 cents. Smaller Microbuses are 25 cents (or one "cora"). Unless otherwise noted in the guide this is the fare. If you need more than one bus to go somewhere, you pay each bus separately. There are 4 variations of the bus **Ruta #52** (the bus closest to us). The only one never to take is #52 Fesiara (which does not go on Calle del Mirador). The **#52 Hotel** goes up (west) on Calle del Mirador and stops right below or right above our street, 85 Av Nte. The **#52** (with no further designation) goes up (west) Paseo Escalon, then north on Bulevar Masferrer, then east on Calle del Mirador to stop again either one block above or one block below our street. The #52 Microbus takes the same route as the regular #52, but turns south from Calle del Mirador on 89 Av Nte (3 blocks above us) so that is where you must get off (or on). The micro also goes right to one of the entrances of the MetroCentro shopping mall while on the other variations of **#52** you must exit on Alameda Roosevelt and walk north about 6 blocks.

CENTRO HISTORICO:

From Bus Stop at 87 Avenida Norte and Calle del Mirador, take the Bus **Ruta #52** (going down or east). Get off the bus at Alameda Juan Pablo II and Parque Infantil one block from Avenida Espana. Plaza Morazan with the magnificent Teatro Nacional is 3 blocks south; Plaza Barrios, the central square with the Catedral Metropolitana and the Palacio Nacional is 5 blocks south on Av. Espana. Catch the same bus **#52-Hotel, #52** or **#52 Micro**, on 11 Calle, 2 blocks north of Juan Pablo II on the east side of Parque Infantil.

CENTRO COMERCIALES METROCENTRO y METROSUR:

the best bus is the **#52 Micro**. see details at the beginning of this section. You can also take any of the other **#52** variations, exit on Alameda Roosevelt near 49 Av and walk 6 blocks north.

TERMINAL OCCIDENTE, San Salvador:

Take the Bus Ruta #52 to the bus stop immediately past Monumento Salvador del Mundo, then walk east one and a half blocks to 59 Av Sur, then south one block on 59 Av. Sur to Av Olimpica. Bus stop is on the southeast corner of 59 Av Sur and Av Olimpica. Catch the Bus Ruta #4 which goes to Terminal Occidente. The walk from Salvador del Mundo directly to the Terminal Occidente is about 1 kilometer. Without luggage or backpacks it is an easy walk, but difficult with bags. To walk from Salvador del Mundo, follow above directions, but continue walking south on 59 Av. Sur across the Rio La Mascota to Boulevard Venezuela. Turn left on Boulevard Venezuela and walk east about 4 blocks to the Terminal, which is on the north side of Boulevard Venezuela, just before you get to 49 Av. Sur (the main highway to the Airport). From Terminal Occidente you can catch buses to the western parts of El Salvador such as the Ruta del las Flores, Juayua, Concepcion de Ataco, Apaneca, Santa Ana, Ahuachapan, and Sonsonante. You can also catch the Ruta #102 bus to Playa la Libertad on Boulevard Venezuela on the corner just west of the Terminal.

TERMINAL ORIENTE, San Salvador:

From Bus Stop at 87 Av Nte and 11 Calle Pte (aka Calle el Mirador), take the Bus Ruta #52 directly to the Terminal Oriente (the end of the line). From Terminal Oriente you can catch buses to the eastern parts of El Salvador, such as Suchitoto, San Miguel, San Vicente, Usulután, Berlin, La Union and the Golfa de Fonseca.

SANTA TECLA and PASEO EL CARMEN:

From Hostal Cumbres del Volcán, walk down (east) 3 blocks on 11 Calle Poniente, until you get to 79 Av Nte where you can catch Bus Ruta #101-D to SANTA TECLA. The trip to Santa Tecla is around 20 minutes, depending on traffic. Exit the bus at Parque San Martin. Santa Tecla's main square and meeting point is a lively park with many shade trees, and people on the benches. Santa Tecla is a very safe city with very little crime. Paseo El Carmen is 2 blocks north of the park on Primer Calle.

PUERTO LA LIBERTAD, Departamento La Libertad:

From Terminal Occidente (on the corner just west of the front of the terminal), take the Bus Ruta #102 (\$1.50) to Puerto La Libertad (also known as La Libertad or Puerto). The famous surfing beach of Punta Roca at Playa la Paz is at the western end of La Libertad. From the stop in La Libertad you can take buses to the western beaches such as El Tunco and Sunzal. For the Costa del Sol and the beaches to the east, there is a different bus that leaves from the Terminal de Sur in San Marcos, a suburb of San Salvador. It is difficult to get to these beaches from La Libertad.

TAXIS:

Taxi from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán to Aeropuerto Internacional Comalapa is \$25.00. We can call cabs to schedule, including taxis needed very early in the morning.

Taxis in El Salvador are plentiful, safe and reliable. Around Colonia Escalón, Colonia La Mascota, Colonia Maquilishuat, or Colonia San Benito (Zona Rosa) the cost for most rides will be \$5.00 - \$6.00 during regular hours. This is the area around the Hostal Cumbres del Volcán. A taxi from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán to the Centro Histórico will be \$5.00 - \$6.00. Late at night the prices will be higher. You can hire a taxi all day for about \$100. We have phone numbers of reliable taxis, and will be happy to call one for you, or arrange for a taxi at a certain time. There are always taxis one block above us in front of the Torre Futura on Calle del Mirador. Always agree on the price before you get in a taxi unless we have arranged the taxi (we will always tell you the price). If you have been drinking, having the bartender or any other employee call you a taxi is safer than walking back to Hostal Cumbres del Volcán at night (although to be honest I often walk home from the Plaza Futura or Plaza Palestina at night and have never had a problem).

RENTING A CAR:

Budget Rent-a-Car is right across the street from Hostal Cumbres del Volcán. Late model compact cars, larger vehicles including SUVs, vans and pickups can be rented there very easily. You need only a credit card, identification, and a driver's license from any country. Cost is \$38.42 a day for an economy sub-compact car. Including insurance the total cost is \$65.42 a day. Loss damage waiver insurance is \$12.00 and supplemental liability insurance is \$15.00. A full size SUV with 3 rows of seats is about \$50.00 more.

A less expensive rental car option is Sandoval and Co, which we recommend. Located in Colonia Layco on 7 Avenida Norte, between 29 Calle Poniente y 27 C. Pte. 503-2225-3841 email: ruben-sandoval@hotmail.com. We would caution you that some of the large chain rental companies have tried to cheat customers by charging for minor dents that were already there. Sandoval has never done this.

More Bus Information: San Salvador's extensive bus network can get you just about anywhere you need to go, although the system can be confusing and there are no maps. Fares are \$0.20 for the large buses and \$0.25 in the small or micro buses.

Buses generally run frequently from 6 am to 7:30 pm daily; fewer buses run on Sunday. Between around 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm they become less frequent and finally stop; some of the minibuses run later, until around 9 pm. If you are going to be out late always ask: a qué hora es el último bus? (What time is the last bus?).

In the city center, it may be faster to walk a few blocks away from Plaza Barrios to catch your bus, as traffic in the city center is hopelessly snarled most of the time.

More bus route information:

Bus 9 Goes down 29a Av Norte alongside the Universidad de El Salvador, then it turns east toward the city center, heading past the cathedral and up Alameda Independencia past Terminal Oriente.

Bus 26 Passes Plaza Barrios in the Centro Histórico, then south to Barrio San Jacinto where you can find the Parque Zoológico, the excellent history museum in the ExCasa Presidencial, the wonderful botanical garden and Natural History Museum in Saburo Hirao's beautiful old

Hacienda, the war museum in Museo ExCuartel Zapote, then finally the bus continues further south to Terminal del Sur in San Marcos.

Bus 29 Goes to Terminal de Oriente via the city center. Pick it up at the large stop between Metrocentro and MetroSur.

Bus 30-B Catch this on the south side of Tercera Calle Pte, just at the corner of 79 Avenida Norte (right in front of Restaurante Swagat). It turns south at 79a Av and continues along Blvd del Hipódromo to Av La Revolución, passing through the Zona Rosa and near the art and anthropology museums, then returns on Alameda Araujo, Roosevelt and 49a Av Sur to MetroSur, then east on Blvd Universitario, by Universidad Nacional, then southwest down Blvd de los Héroes to Metrocentro. From

there, it goes west along Alameda Roosevelt, past the El Salvador del Mundo monument and continues west along Paseo General Escalón past Galerías Escalón and finally back to 79 Av.

Bus 34 Runs from Terminal de Oriente to Metrocentro then down to the Zona Rosa, turning around right in front of the Museo de Arte (MARTE). Passes Terminal de Occidente on its return.

Bus 42 From the Centro Historico, the bus takes you Colonia San Benito. The bus goes west along Calle Arce from the cathedral and continues along Alameda Roosevelt. At Salvador del Mundo, it heads southwest along Alameda Araujo, passing the Mercado Nacional de Artesanías and Museo

Nacional de Antropología David J Guzmán, and continues down the Carretera Panamericana, passing Iglesia La Ceiba de Guadalupe.

Bus 44 The bus to take to the Terminal de Occidente and Universidad Centroamericana José Simeon Cañas (UCA). The route heads southwest on Blvd de los Héroes past Metrocentro and continues south on 49a Av Sur. For the Terminal de Occidente, get off at Av Venezuela and walk a few blocks west. The bus continues along a roundabout route, eventually passing the lower and then upper entrances to UCA - the latter, on Calle de Mediterráneo, is more convenient. The bus turns around, passing the upper UCA entrance again before turning at Iglesia La Ceiba de Guadalupe and heading up Alameda Araujo, past MetroSur and continuing downtown.

Bus 52 Has four variations: the regular #52 heads straight up Paseo Escalón to Plaza Masferrer, then north on Bulevar Masferrer, then down Calle del Mirador to pass the Hotel Crowne Plaza and us; the 2nd variation (labeled #52 Hotel) cuts up Calle del Mirador, passing us and the Crowne Plaza before turning left down Bulevar Masferrer. Both return along Paseo General Escalón and can be picked up at MetroSur. The rare variation "**Fesiara**" does not go on Calle del Mirador at all, so do not take it. The **Bus 52 microbus** takes the same route as the regular **#52**, but turns south on 89 Av (the western side of the Torre Futura). It then goes down Paseo Escalón the same as all the others except "**Fesaria**", but turns north on 49 Av to Juan Pablo II where you can exit for the gigantic MetroCentro/MetroSur shopping center. All of the **#52** variations eventually end up on Juan Pablo II, and then go to the Terminal Oriente which is the end of the line.

Bus 101 Goes from Plaza Barrios in the city center, past MetroSur, past the Museo Nacional de Antropología David J Guzmán, past Iglesia La Ceiba de Guadalupe and on to Santa Tecla.

Bus Ruta #138 and #400. Both of these go to the **Comalapa International Airport**. They do not run after 7:30 PM. They both go to the Centro Histórico, Sexta Calle and Segunda Avenida by ExCine Apolo and one block south of Plaza Barrios. The **#52 Bus** to Hostal Cumbres del Volcán is on Alameda Juan Pablo Segundo, seven blocks north at Avenida Hispana, one block west (by the pasarela or pedestrian bridge).

MISCELLANEOUS:

Good Web Sites: <http://dontforgettomove.com/> Also: Backpackista.com Facebook: Discover the Undiscovered Central America: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/discovercentralamerica/> and: Nuestro El Salvador de Antano: Facebook/groups/NESDEA and Facebook: Images de Anatano.

For Architecture Buffs: Remaining mansions on Paseo Escalón including 60s group above 79 Av. Oolonia Flor Blanca and area around Salvador del Mundo has many beautiful old houses with the very unique Salvadoran mix of Spanish Colonial and art deco. Alas the condition, maintenance and worse the horrible remodeling often leaves a lot to be desired. For those interested, I have a collection of over 5,000 El Salvador historic photos, and will happily show them to any history buffs interested. Neighborhoods of San Miquelito and UTEC/Colonia Duenas also have very interesting architecture.

SPANISH SCHOOLS (information from their web sites):

Information on the following two Spanish Schools is taken from this link:
<http://www.salvaspan.com/>:

Escuela Punta Roca Study in La Libertad, Santa Ana, or through an exchange with the Escuela Cuzcatlan in San Salvador. You can study at one, two, or all three. Full-immersion which includes intensive Spanish instruction and a homestay with a Salvadoran family. Students have the option of a hotel for an additional charge. Offers three excursions per week to Mayan ruins, waterfalls, highland coffee villages like Los Naranjos and Nahuizalco, and museums for \$30 a week. The full program is \$800 a month, or \$200 a week. Flexible scheduling options and one-on-one classes are available. Discounts available for groups. **Email: info@salvaspan.com**

Escuela Sihuatehuacan Operates Spanish-language study programs at five locations in El Salvador: Santa Ana, San Salvador, San Miguel, Sunzal and Puerto La Libertad. The basic lesson plan consists of twenty hours of study a week, four hours a day, beginning on Monday. You will be given a placement exam upon arrival to determine your level of instruction. Class size limited to 8 students;

one-on-one instruction is available. Salsa, Merengue, Cumbia, and Folklorico dance classes also offered. **Email: info@salvaspan.com.**

Melida Anaya Montes Spanish School The school is part of the Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (CIS), a left wing political organization. Objectives are to teach students to speak and understand Spanish within a political, social and cultural context, broaden student's understanding of Salvadoran culture and politics, and involve students in leftist political activities.

Location: San Salvador. **Email: cis_elsalvador@yahoo.com**